

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed June 18, 2008.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-16, 20, 21, 23-26, 30, 31, 33-36, 39 and 41-53 were pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-16, 20, 21, 23-26, 30, 31, 33-36, 39 and 41-52 have been rejected. Claim 53 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

This Amendment amends claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34-36, 41, 44, 45, 47-52 and cancels claims 3, 16, 26, 39, 42-43, and 53. No new claims have been added. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added by the amendments. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23-25, 30, 31, 33-36, 41, and 44-52 remain pending in this application after entry of this amendment.

Reconsideration of the rejections is requested in view of the remarks below.

THE CLAIMS

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 14-16, 20, 21 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim 14 as amended recites, “one or more processor readable storage devices storing plurality of instructions causing a processor to use workflows for performing tasks” and is believed to be directed to statutory subject matter. In view of the amendment, withdrawal of the rejection with respect to claim 14 is respectfully requested.

Claims 15, 20, 21 and 23 that depend from claim 14 are also believed to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. §101 for at least a similar rationale as discussed above with respect to claim 14.

In light of the above, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §101 rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-16, 20, 21, 23-26, 30, 31, 33-36, 39 and 41-52

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-16, 20, 21, 23-26, 30, 31, 33-36, 39 and 41-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheng (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,548) (hereinafter "Cheng") in view of McNally et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,823,513) (hereinafter "McNally"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Claim 1

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is not rendered obvious by Cheng or McNally, considered individually or in combination. Applicant submits that claim 1 recites several features that are not taught or suggested by Cheng or McNally considered independently or in combination.

For example, claim 1 recites:

1. A computer-implemented method for using workflows, the method comprising:
 - associating workflows with one or more domains in an identity system, each domain comprising one or more entities;
 - receiving a request to perform a task that affects at least one identity profile associated with an entity in said identity system;
 - determining from said one or more domains, a domain that includes said entity with which said at least one identity profile is associated;
 - determining a set of workflows associated with said domain and capable of performing said task;
 - outputting said set of workflows to a user;
 - receiving from said user a selection of a first workflow from said set of workflows; and
 - performing said first workflow for said task;
wherein:
 - said request includes an identification of said at least one identity profile

As recited in claim 1 above, workflows are associated with one or more domains. As further recited in claim 1, when a request is received to perform a task that affects an identity profile of an entity, the domain that includes that entity with which the identity profile is associated is determined. A set of workflows associated with that determined domain and capable of performing that task are determined. The set of workflows are then output to a user and a selection of a first workflow from the set of workflows is received from the user. The first

workflow is then performed. In this manner, as recited in claim 1, when a request is received to perform a task, a workflow that is associated with a domain that includes the target affected by the task (e.g., the at least one identity profile associated with an entity) is determined and performed. An invention such as that recited in claim 1 is useful for a complex identity system that involves complex interactions between companies and their customers, suppliers, partners, and employees, where workflow definitions may change from organization to organization arising the need to associate the different workflow definitions with different entities within the organization (page 2, line 21 to page 3, line 10 of the specification). Applicant submits that at least these features of claim 1 are not taught or suggested by Cheng or McNally, considered either individually or in combination.

The Office Action alleges that Cheng teaches the various features of claim 1 (as previously pending) at col. 3:15-col. 5:16, col. 6:40-col. 7:67, col. 13:9-col. 16:10, col. 16:10-65, col. 11:52-58, col. 12:64-col. 13:33, Figure 9 and Figure 10. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Cheng describes techniques for modeling an enterprise for collaborative computing. In Cheng, the organization model is separated from the process model, the application model, and the data model. (Cheng: Abstract). In Cheng, as described in col. 3 lines 25-38, the relationship model supports collaborative software such as workflow, for authentication, authorization, and dynamic job assignment. Virtual links are used to model dynamic roles such that policies regarding various operations over the work objects can be defined and maintained. The virtual links use relationship definition to link or relate one member object with other member objects and this relationship definition can be dynamically evaluated and resolved. With respect to workflows, Cheng further describes that, for performing a step in a workflow, assignment and authorization is performed that includes role resolution to identify the right resources (persons/employees) playing a specific role that can perform the step and are authorized to perform the step of the workflow process. Thus, while Cheng does describe workflows, Cheng is concerned with identifying the role that can perform and is authorized to perform the step of the workflow. This is completely different from the features of claim 1, which among other features associates a workflow with one or more domains and identifies a workflow to perform a requested task.

Claim 1, as amended, specifically recites:

associating workflows with one or more domains in an identity system

Applicant submits that this feature of claim 1 is not taught by Cheng. The Office Action seems to allege that the “virtual links” in Cheng described in col. 3:15 –col. 5:16 teach this feature of claim 1. Applicant respectfully disagrees. In this section, Cheng describes that a virtual link is a relationship definition used for relating member objects with other member objects. This virtual link or the relationship between member objects is defined with an expression and the expression is evaluated to resolve the relationship dynamically (Cheng: col. 9:49-53). For example, a virtual link such as at col. 9:60-65 of Cheng, when evaluated over the employee organization (scope) finds all employees that are under the managerial responsibility (relationship) of the member who has been set as the Owner. In simple terms, evaluating a virtual link or the expression in Cheng determines all the employees that satisfy the relationship as defined in the expression. Thus, from the above, it is clear that virtual links in Cheng relate one member object with another. Further, as described in Cheng col. 6:48-58, these member objects map to an actual entity within the enterprise – these member objects do not map to workflows. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the virtual links in Cheng do not associate a workflow with a domain, as recited in claim 1. Applicant further submits that Cheng fails to teach anything about associating workflows with one or more domains, as recited in claim 1.

Claim 1, as amended, further specifically recites:

receiving a request to perform a task that affects at least one identity profile associated with an entity in said identity system;

determining from said one or more domains, a domain that includes said entity with which said at least one identity profile is associated;

determining a set of workflows associated with said domain and capable of performing said task

The Office Action seems to allege that the above-recited features of claim 1 are taught by Cheng in col. 13:9-col. 16:10, col. 16:10-65. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Cheng in these sections describes task assignment, such as in assigning a particular resource to execute

a step of a workflow process, and task authorization, such as in authorizing the resource to perform the task. Both task assignment and task authorization involve role resolution that refers to identifying the right resources or identifying the employee or person to whom the task can be assigned. For example, at col. 14:35-60 when a member M attempts to open a step of a workflow process, the workflow engine resolves the role relationship of M with the initiator of the process, where the role relationship is defined as an expression, to ascertain whether M is the manager of the initiator of the process and the result accordingly determines whether M is authorized to perform the task. Thus, in this section, Cheng teaches identification of a role to perform a task or a step of a workflow process – i.e., whether M is authorized to perform a step of the workflow process. This section of Cheng however does not teach anything about identifying a workflow to perform a task as recited in claim 1. For example, this section of Cheng does not teach anything about determining the domain which includes the entity with which the identity profile affected by the requested task is associated and identifying a set of workflows associated with that domain and that are capable of performing the requested task, as is recited in claim 1. In simple terms, given a workflow process, Cheng teaches determining who (resources) will perform the steps of the workflow, but given a task to be performed Cheng does not teach anything about determining a domain and workflows that will perform that task.

Accordingly Applicant submits that, Cheng does not teach that when a request to perform a task affecting an identity profile is received, the domain including the entity with which the identity profile is associated is determined, and then the set of workflows that are associated with the determined domain and that can perform the task are determined, as recited in claim 1.

Claim 1, as amended, also specifically recites:

outputting said set of workflows to a user;
receiving from said user a selection of a first workflow from said set of workflows; and
performing said first workflow for said task

The Office Action seems to agree that the above-recited features of claim 1 are not explicitly taught by Cheng and seems to allege that McNally in col. 5:61 – col. 6:59 and

Figures 5-8 teaches the above-recited features of claim 1. Applicant respectfully disagrees. McNally describes a workflow distribution process that includes users at computer controlled display stations, the users assigned activities in the workflow distribution. McNally further describes limiting access of the users, to computer resources needed to complete the assigned activities, through the computer controlled display stations. The set of elements representing designated computer resources accessible to the user to carry out the assigned activities are displayed to the user and after completion of the assigned activities these elements are removed from the display. (McNally Abstract).

Col. 5:61 – col. 6:59 and Figures 5-8 of McNally describe the screens that may be presented to the users executing assigned activities during the execution of such activities. The activities A-C listed in these screens are activities that have been assigned to the user, the user then selects one activity that the user will view or execute and other screens show the resources available to the user for completing the selected activity. Thus, in McNally the list of activities displayed are activities that have been assigned to the user - the activities are not characterized as being associated with any domain. More specifically, McNally does not teach or suggest outputting a set of workflows where from other features of claim 1, the set of workflows are associated with a domain that includes the entity with which the identity profile affected by the requested task is associated and also does not teach receiving a user selection of a first workflow to perform the requested task as recited in claim 1 above. Applicant thus submits that the features of outputting said set of workflows to a user, receiving from said user a selection of a first workflow from said set of workflows, and performing said first workflow for said task, as recited in claim 1, are not taught by McNally.

Applicant further submits that the other deficiencies of Cheng (discussed above) are also not cured by McNally.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that even if Cheng and McNally were combined as suggested by the Office Action (even though there appears to be no motivation for the combination), the resultant combination would not render claim 1 obvious.

In light of the above comments, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over a combination of Cheng and McNally.

Claims 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23-25, 30, 31, 33-36, 41, 44-52

Applicant submits that claims 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 13, 34-36, 41, and 44-52 that depend from claim 1 are allowable over a combination of Cheng and McNally for at least a similar rationale as discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Applicant submits that independent claims 14 and 24 are allowable over a combination of Cheng and McNally for at least a similar rationale as discussed above with respect to claim 1. Further, Applicant submits that claims 15, 20, 21, and 23 that depend from claim 14 are allowable over a combination of Cheng and McNally for at least a similar rationale as discussed above with respect to claim 14. Applicant also submits that claims 25, 30, 31, and 33 that depend from claim 24 are allowable over a combination of Cheng and McNally for at least a similar rationale as discussed above with respect to claim 24.

The dependent claims are allowable for additional reasons.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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